

Provo Herald 10 Sep 1970

Heber Businessmen to Ask For Scenic Railway Rights

A definite commitment to ask the State Road Commission for property to operate a scenic railway climaxed a meeting of Heber City businessmen Tuesday evening.

Earlier in the day, 14 prominent individuals and press boarded a switch engine for a scenic tour of the proposed railway route from Heber City to the Deer Creek Dam.

The group proposes to operate a railroad museum, and a scenic steam locomotive train over a route from Heber City to Wildwood in Provo Canyon as a tourist attraction.

The State Road Commission has other plans for the property at a later date, and are letting bids on the railroad trackage in Provo Canyon Sept. 23. The commission has given the group two weeks to come up with a feasible plan which they feel they can accept.

The Wasatch Mountain Railway members contend they are entitled to have use of property the state doesn't really need at this time, when the use

will not devalue the property.

Ed McLaughlin, spokesman for the Wasatch Mountain Railway group, stated, "It would be a sad situation to lose the potential of this tourist attraction, when we have everything we need to operate on a trial basis to prove this could be a tremendous success. What we want is a chance to prove we can do it."

The proposed railway would be owned by individuals, and not Wasatch County or Heber City, therefore, no tax money or state money would be involved.

Mr. McLaughlin compared the Wasatch Mountain Railway to the one in Silverton, Colorado where thousands of tourists go out of their way to ride the railway located there. "The location of a railway in Heber City, could not fail as the town is on the way to everywhere. The success of the plan is dependent upon selling those individuals in authority to postpone the decisions on the right of way in Provo Canyon," he stated.

Historic Foundation Proposal

Railroad Steams Into Plans of Canyon

Tribune 9-10-70

By Irene Jones

Tribune Staff Writer

HEBER CITY — Since the famed "Heber Creeper" died earlier this year, rusting railroad tracks winding up through Provo Canyon await their probable destruction.

Coming to the rescue, maybe, will be the Wasatch Mountain Railway, a steam tourist railroad planned by the Wasatch Railway Museum and Foundation, Inc., Salt Lake City.

The right-of-way owned by the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad has been purchased by the Utah State Road Commission.

Edwin E. Lovelace, State Highway Department District 6 engineer, has announced that construction of the first phase of a proposed expressway through Provo Canyon has been delayed, at least until next spring.

Too Late This Year

Plans are completed for the project from the mouth of the canyon to Nuns, about 4½ miles up the canyon, including construction of three bridges, one at the mouth of the canyon, at Canyon Glen and at Nuns.

Cost would be about \$5 million, he said, and it is too late in the season to start such a project Mr. Lovelace said.

U.S. 189, which now runs through the canyon, will remain as a frontage road, giving access to area recreational facilities.

The proposed highway, scheduled to be constructed at least partially along the railroad right-of-way, would have access roads at the mouth of Provo Canyon, Rotary Park located a half mile below Bridal Veil Falls, Vivian Park and Wildwood.

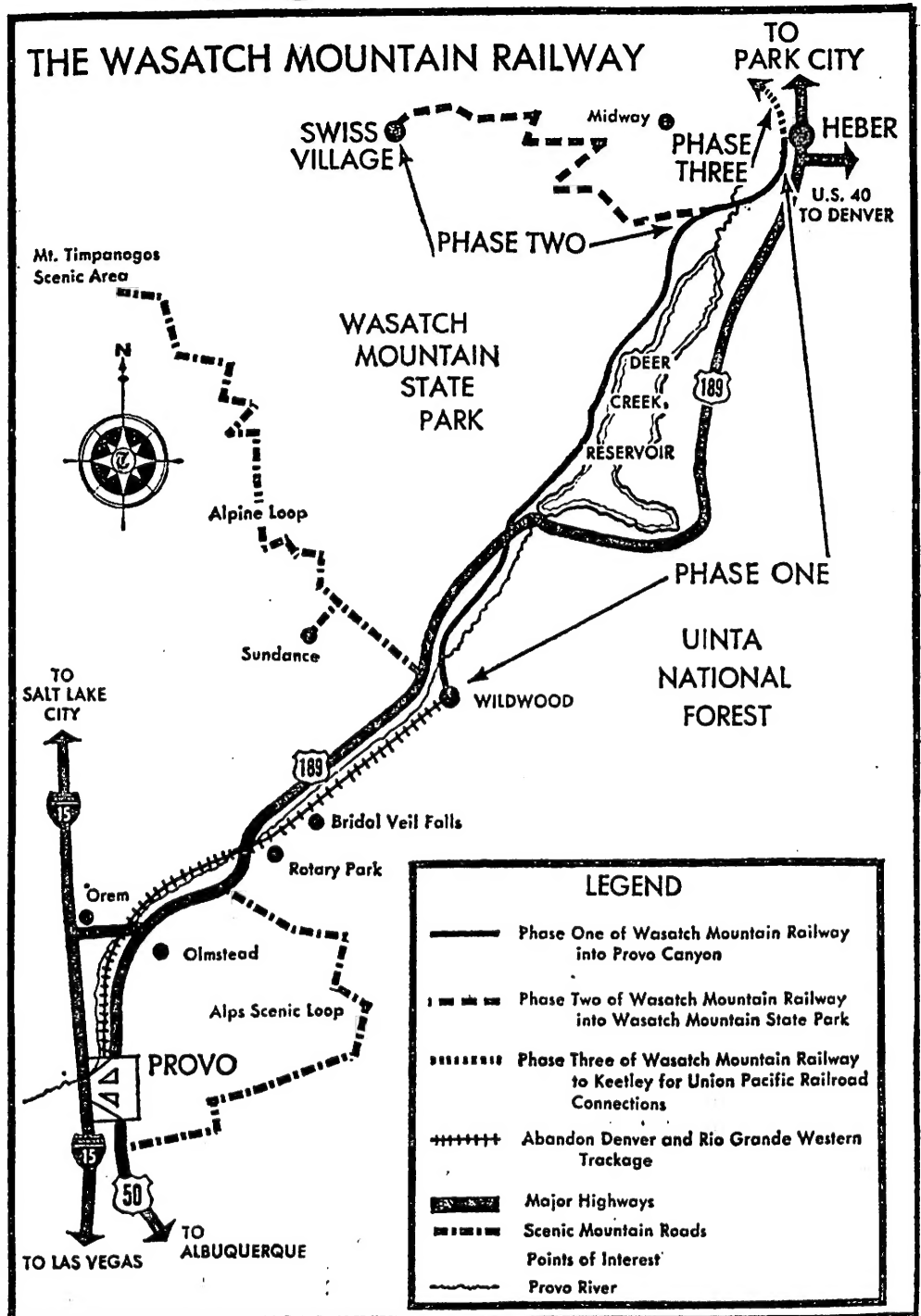
Bids were opened on a project to remove the tracks, which run from the mouth of Provo Canyon to Heber City. However, the commission last week heard a Wasatch Chamber of Commerce member ask to save the trackage north of Wildwood, located 13 miles up the canyon.

Bids Held

The bids have been held for two weeks while the Wasatch Railway Museum and Foundation, Inc., and the Wasatch Chamber of Commerce prepared a feasibility report for the commission concerning the advantages of the steam tourist railway.

A survey by the foundation shows a steam tourist railroad through Provo Canyon would increase tourism in Central Utah.

Looking to the future, Jay R. Edwards, foundation president, said the state is promoting what may well become the largest and most successful steam tourist railroad in Utah.



Shown is route for Wasatch Mountain Railway, a steam tourist train being planned by the Wasatch Railway Museum and Foundation, Inc.

of the museum would be in Heber City, the station providing an exhibit area for museum material.

Phase two, to be developed in six to eight years, would include construction of a railway line to the Swiss Village from Heber City. The train would run year-round to the facilities in the Wasatch Mountain State Park.

Phase three would connect Heber City with the Union Pacific trackage at Park City, providing tourists and residents contact to another resort area.

Total estimated cost of the project is \$684,502.50 — which includes new trackage, more equipment, insurance and opening costs. In estimating revenues for the first year, the foundation determined that approximately \$5,812.50 would be from persons using the road.

the form of a loan plus an actual grant.

4. The Four Corners Regional Commission and the EDA jointly aiding the project.

5. Utah State retaining ownership of the trackage until the note is paid in full.

Economic Growth

Leon Ritchie, president of the Wasatch Chamber of Commerce, said the steam tourist railroad would bring in revenue year-round — enabling Wasatch, Summit and Utah Counties to grow economically.

He noted that more than 100 steam tourist railroads are operating in the United States. None to date, is relying on state aid, he said.

E. M. McLaughlin, secretary-treasurer of the foundation, said in a letter to Mr. Ritchie, that museum officials have

for tourists — Homestead and Wasatch Mountain State Park — as well as the highly important Wasatch Front population centers from which to draw for initial patronage support, required in a railway of this type," he said.

Begin in 1971

If the State Road Commission approves the plan for the railroad, the facility would begin operating at the beginning of the 1971 tourist season.

Construction of the proposed highway through Provo Canyon will not reach Wildwood for two years — fiscal year 1973. During this time the railroad could be in operation, Mr. Edwards said, giving foundation members a chance to investigate a successful steam tourist railroad in Utah.

The Wasatch Chamber of Commerce and the Wasatch County Commission met Sat-

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A survey by the foundation shows a steam tourist railroad through Provo Canyon would increase tourism in Central Utah.

Looking to the future, Jay R. Edwards, foundation president, said the state is promoting what may well become the largest outdoor recreation attraction in the Intermountain area, the Wasatch Mountain State Park, northwest of Deer Creek Reservoir.

This park, expected to be completed within eight years, will contain a multi-million-dollar winter ski and summer resort complex, he said.

The Utah State Division of Parks and Recreation of the Department of National Resources, he said, has expressed interest over the possibility of constructing a scenic railroad from the present Heber branch line to the ski resort complex planned for the park.

The stream tourist railroad, which could be used year-round, would aid parking problems in the resort area and create a summer activity, he added.

Four Engines

The Museum Foundation now owns four steam locomotives, each rare and exceptional exhibit material, said Mr. Edwards.

Other equipment already acquired includes four passenger cars, a caboose, tools and essential spare parts and artifacts from railroad history, available for museum display.

Planned in the venture are three railroad stations, at Heber City, Wildwood and the proposed Swiss Village, in the Wasatch Mountain State Park.

Mr. Edwards said that once the railway would be in operation, an "Old West town" could be developed on the land area west of Heber City. Restaurants, opera houses, antique and souvenir shops and motels, along with other recreation and entertainment facilities would be available.

Phase Two

The foundation expects to build the railway in three phases, beginning with the railway between Heber City and Wildwood. Headquarters

of the museum would be in Heber City, the station providing an exhibit area for museum material.

Phase two, to be developed in six to eight years, would include construction of a railway line to the Swiss Village from Heber City. The train would run year-round to the facilities in the Wasatch Mountain State Park.

Phase three would connect Heber City with the Union Pacific trackage at Park City, providing tourists and residents contact to another resort area.

Total estimated cost of the project is \$684,502.50 — which includes new trackage, more equipment, insurance and opening costs. In estimating revenues for the first year, the foundation determined that approximately \$275,812.50 would be brought in from persons using the railroad.

As to financing the project, the foundation suggested five methods, which are now under consideration and in the early stages of development.

They include:

1. Leasing the museum to a private stock holder company.
2. The Economic Development Administration participation program acting jointly with local banks to finance the railroad on a pure loan basis.
3. The EDA participating in

the form of a loan plus an actual grant.

4. The Four Corners Regional Commission and the EDA jointly aiding the project.

5. Utah State retaining ownership of the trackage until the note is paid in full.

Economic Growth

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He noted that more than 100 steam tourist railroads are operating in the United States. None to date, is relying on state aid, he said.

E. M. McLaughlin, secretary-treasurer of the foundation, said in a letter to Mr. Ritchie, that museum officials have been told time and time again by responsible businessmen and tourist-minded state officials that the Provo to Heber City trackage is the most ideal and desirable location for the development of a steam tourist railway in all of Utah.

"The Provo-Heber area has everything needed to support an important tourist project of this type. The wealth of scenery, excellent highway access, other developments

for tourists — Homestead and Wasatch Mountain State Park — as well as the highly important Wasatch Front population centers from which to draw for initial patronage support, required in a railway of this type," he said.

Begin in 1971

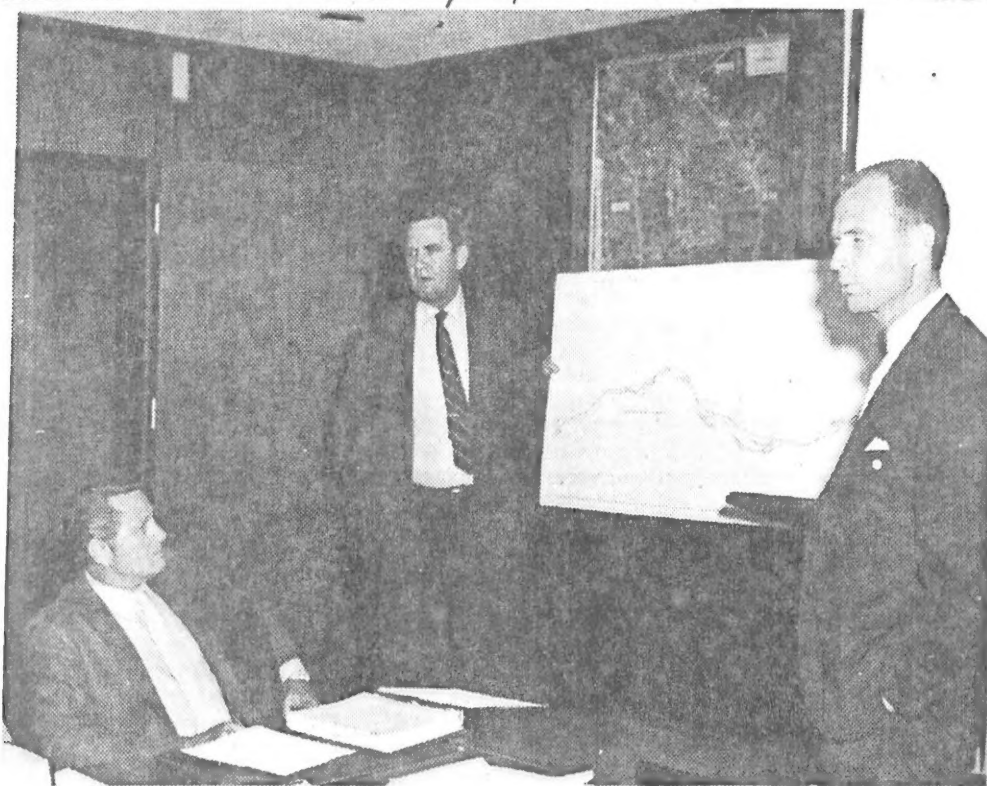
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The Wasatch Chamber of Commerce and the Wasatch County Commission met Saturday morning and agreed to ask the State Road Commission for permission to use the abandoned railroad between Heber and Deer Creek Dam.

The Wasatch Steam Museum plans to bring in equipment in the near future and begin operations in the spring of next year.

The group feels the project will be a big tourist attraction that will benefit the State of Utah and Wasatch County.



HIGHWAY ENGINEERS are seen here explaining points concerning the proposed highway up Provo Canyon before the Uvida board of directors. Standing at left is Ed Lovelace, District 5 engineer and on the right

is Bert Taylor, design engineer for the road. In the background is the map of the canyon and the proposed road which Mr. Taylor is discussing. Seated at the left is Uvida President B. E. (Bye) Jensen.

Uvida Votes Backing For Canyon Highway

By JERRY M. YOUNG

The Utah Valley Industrial Development Association board of directors last night heard both the Highway Department and members of the Save Provo River Association argue the merits of the proposed Provo Canyon highway and then the

board voted to support the new road.

In their regular board meeting the Uvida directors invited presentations from a trio from the highway department headed by Wayne Winters, one of three highway commissioners in the state highway department

After a few words from Mr. Winters, the factual presentation from the highway department's point of view was presented by Ed Lovelace, engineer for District 5, and Bert Taylor, the design engineer on the road.

The three-party delegation representing the Save Provo River Association included Kay Mendenhall, Mrs. Lillian Hayes, and Jim Jensen.

Both sides went over their allotted 15 minutes time period which was set by B. E. (Bye) Jensen, president of Uvida.

Traffic Load

Mr. Winters began by stating that the projected traffic load would be as high as 20,000 cars per day within the next 20 years, and that the road's design was

such that the canyon would be able to handle that much traffic.

Mr. Taylor indicated that the proposed highway was designed as a controlled access road which is a much safer kind of road than any other type except a freeway. He said that since the limited access would in turn cut down on the accessibility to the canyon's recreational areas, that the intent of the Highway Department was to leave as much of the current road intact so that people wishing to use the facilities would be able to do so with ease.

Ultimately 4 Lanes

The expected traffic, Mr. Taylor says, warrants a four lane highway which will ultimately be built in the canyon, but since funding does not allow such a project at this time, the road will be built in sections and only two lanes at the present and an additional two lanes later, he stated.

The current road will be a 40-foot road, and will ultimately become an 80-foot highway with four 12-foot lanes which will have a 14-foot center divider.

Mr. Taylor outlined the areas where the road will cross the river and will cause some change in the channel of the river. These two points are just below and just above the Murdock Diversion Dam.

Avoid Aqueduct

The change in the river
(Continued on Page 2)



KAY MENDENHALL, representing the Save Provo River Association points out questions he feels remain unanswered about the proposed highway up Provo Canyon.

Agencies Cooperate in Effort To Preserve the Scenic Values

By JOSEPHINE ZIMMERMAN

In February, 1968, four agencies (Provo Chamber of Commerce, Utah County Commission, Provo City Corp., and Wasatch County Commission) directed a letter to the Utah Highway Department, U.S. Forest Service, and Utah Fish and Game Department asking them to give careful study to seven requests and to "abide by them as closely as possible in planning the Provo Canyon highway."

The requests, in capsule form, included: (1) That the highway department design and construct a highway that will enhance rather than detract from the canyon scenery, and that consideration be given "to all human values desired from the canyon."

(2) That the developed recreation areas and undeveloped areas with recreation

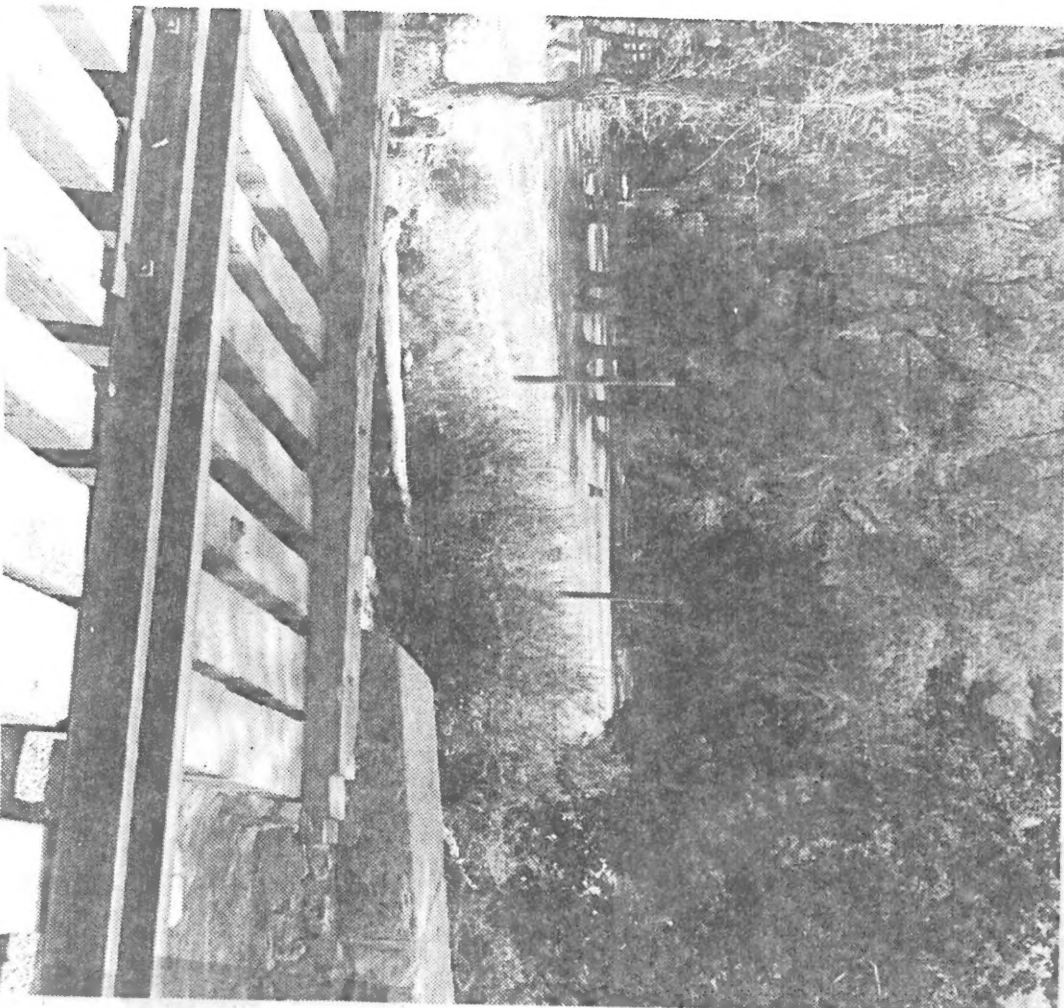
potential remain highly accessible from the main highway. (3) That construction interfere as little as possible with the natural river bed, since Provo River provides more fishing than any other Utah river, and fishing waters, if destroyed, cannot be replaced.

(4) That adequate lookout points be planned for the numerous scenic views.

(5) That the canyon's unique geographic and geologic formations be protected and remain visible and accessible from the highway.

(6) That the agencies cooperate in prohibiting construction of unsightly establishments and advertisements along the highway and keep structures in harmony with the surrounding landscape.

(7) That the Forest Service and Fish and Game Department, having strong interests in the canyon and insight into the



LOWER CANYON RECREATION AREAS such as Canyon Glen, shown across the old railroad bridge, have been preserved to a

large extent through revised highway plans, according to Provo City and Utah County officials.

Canyon Highway

Strong Effort Made to Preserve Scenic and Recreational Values

(Continued From Page 1)

that all coordinate their efforts to provide the people with a better highway for travel and also a more beautiful and useful Provo Canyon.

In June, 1969, a year and a half later, Clarence Thornock, supervisor of the Uinta National Forest, sent a progress report on a coordinated study by the agencies of the lower Provo Canyon highway project. While congratulating the four governmental bodies "on giving meaningful guidance in planning this highway project," the letter indicated that "with the design criteria given, it is difficult to meet some of your recommendations."

He indicated that some tentative changes in the preliminary alignment had been made, but stated "While we agree on general principles, we are having difficulty with significant details on the upper end of the project."

"There is such a concentrated complex of recreation sites, scenic overlooks, geological formations, and fishing waters

located in a critical 4½-mile section of this canyon that we should request a modification of the design criteria for the section from Nunns to a point one quarter mile above the Alpine Loop junction," Mr. Thornock's letter continued. He recommended that this section be taken out of the limited access category and developed for four lanes of traffic, plus a center lane in lieu of a center median, pointing out that it would "greatly enhance the developed recreation areas close to the highway" and make them "highly accessible to the public."

Emphasizing that "suitable recreation sites are at a premium in this magnificent canyon," Mr. Thornock presented an alternate road plan which would provide for more fully-developed commercial facilities and public recreation sites to serve the traveling public. They further recommended a reduction in speed from 60 to 45 miles per hour, as well as changing the design criteria with vertical bin walls

and guard rails to "help keep the proposed highway out of several important fishing holes."

The letter also recommended development of the old railroad right-of-way into an excellent bridal path and fisherman's trail from Rotary Park to the trestle.

Members of the Provo City Commission reported this week that during months of negotiations, the highway department had been "most cooperative in meeting our requests ... within limits." Those limits included the Road Commission's decision to build a limited access freeway, and the limits imposed by the canyon itself.

The Utah County Commission also stressed the highway department's cooperative attitude. Commissioner Paul Thorn declared, "The alignment we now have in the lower canyon is a far different road from the plan which was first presented to us."

Lavern D. Green, Utah County Surveyor, stated "We have been able to save most of the recreation areas in the lower canyon for the enjoyment of the

public, and have insured that they can be reached by way of a safe road which will be free of dangerous thru traffic."

The present canyon road will revert to Utah County when the new road is completed, and the Utah County Commissioners affirmed that they will maintain it as a good access road to the recreation areas.

Concerning the higher section of the canyon, Commissioner Thorn emphasized, "We have told the Road Commission that we don't want any chute carrying the traffic from Heber City to Provo." He pointed out that no definite road plan has yet been presented for the upper portion of the road, but said the Utah County Coordinating Council, the Council of Governments, and other agencies will continue to work closely with the highway department in getting the best alignment possible.

Mr. Thornock declared that while the decision to build a freeway had eliminated plans for the scenic road, he felt the highway department had made many changes and concessions which are desirable. He also pointed out that the speed on the new highway is being planned for 50 miles per hour, rather than the original 60, which will be beneficial for sightseers. This lower speed limit was confirmed by Bert Taylor, pre-construction engineer.

